



United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
Washington, D.C. 20240

JUL 13 2010

Todd Steiner
Executive Director
Sea Turtle Restoration Project
P.O. Box 370
Forest Knolls, CA 94933

Dear Mr. Steiner:

Thank you for your letter of July 7, 2010, (also signed by Carole Allen and Teri Shore) requesting that Kemp's ridley sea turtle hatchlings from Texas nests, currently incubating at Padre Island National Seashore, be maintained in captivity to avoid potential exposure to oil from the BP Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill.

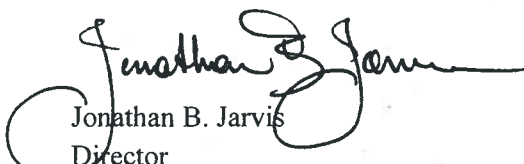
On June 8, 2010, nationally recognized sea turtle experts from key federal and state agencies met to discuss critical sea turtle issues relative to the oil spill and determine a course of action to minimize impacts of the spill on the turtles. It was decided that hatchlings that would emerge from oiled beaches and beaches with oil immediately offshore would be moved to safer locations for release. The nests in Alabama and the Panhandle of Florida, where oil is present, would be relocated to the Atlantic coast so that hatchlings could be released there. Hatchlings that would emerge on beaches that are not oiled and that do not have oil immediately offshore, such as those in Texas and southwest Florida, would be released as normal.

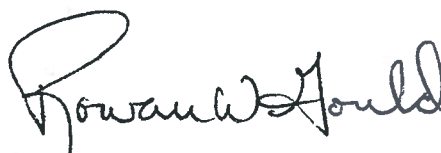
Kemp's ridley hatchling emergence in Texas typically occurs from mid-June through late August. Research indicates that it takes a span of months for hatchlings entering the western Gulf from Texas beaches to reach the eastern Gulf. We believe the most biologically acceptable approach is to allow hatchlings to enter Gulf waters off the Texas coast as normal.

Federal and state conservation agencies continue to monitor conditions in the Gulf relative to the oil spill. Should conditions change such that there would be greater danger to the hatchlings in Texas, plans will be adjusted accordingly.

Thank you for concerns and interest in sea turtle conservation. If you have any additional questions, please contact Joe Escoto, Superintendent of Padre Island National Seashore at (361) 949-8173.

Sincerely,


Jonathan B. Jarvis
Director
National Park Service


Rowan Gould
Acting Director
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service